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PROGRAM MANAGEMENT IN DEFENSE ACQUISITION

Department of Defense (DoD) policy calls for the systems acquisition process to be directed by a responsible manager under the concept of program management. The terms program, product, and project are used interchangeably. The role of the program manager (PM) (or product or project manager) is to direct the development, production, and initial deployment (as a minimum) of a system. This must be done within limits of cost, schedule, performance, and logistics support objectives approved by the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) (USD(A&T)) or head of the military department (service) or defense agency, or designee. The PM's role, then, is to be the agent of the service or defense agency in the management of a weapon system or automated information system (AIS) acquisition program within the defense acquisition process.

Definition of Program Management

The process whereby a single leader exercises centralized authority and responsibility for planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, and leading the combined efforts of participating/assigned civilian and military personnel and organizations, for the management of a specific defense acquisition program or programs, through development, production, deployment, operations, support, and disposal.

Program management must first take into account diverse interests and points of view. Second, it facilitates tailoring the

management system and techniques to the uniqueness of the program. Third, it represents integration of a complex system of differing but related functional discipline areas which must work together to achieve program goals.

Program Manager's Perspective

The effective PM should have the "big picture" perspective of the program, including in-depth knowledge of the interrelationships among its elements. An effective PM:

- is a leader and a manager, not primarily a task "doer."
- understands the requirements, environmental factors, organizations, activities, constraints, risks, and motivations impacting the program.
- knows and is capable of working within the established framework, managerial systems, and processes that provide funding and other decisions for the program to proceed.
- comprehends and puts to use the basic skills of management—planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling—so people and systems harmonize to produce the desired results.
- coordinates the work of defense industry contractors, consultants, in-house engineers and logisticians, contracting officers, and others, whether assigned directly to the program office or supporting it thorough some form of matrix (or integrated product team (IPT)) arrangement.
- builds support for the program and monitors reactions and perceptions which help or impede progress.

 serves both the military needs of the user in the field and the priority and funding constraints imposed by managers in the Pentagon and service/defense agency headquarters.

Why is Program Management Used in Defense Acquisition?

Program management provides a single point of contact who is the major force for directing the system through its evolution, including design, development, production, deployment, operations and support, and disposal. The PM, while perhaps being unable to control the environment, has management authority over business and technical aspects of a specific program. The PM has only one responsibility—managing that program—and accountability is clear. For defense acquisition programs, industry follows a process similar to that used by the DoD. Often contractors will staff and operate their program office to parallel that of the military program office for whom they are performing their contractual effort.

IPTs and Integrated Product and Process Development (IPPD)

An IPT is composed of representatives from all appropriate functional disciplines (i.e., multidisciplinary) working together with a team leader to structure and execute programs. IPTs exist at both the oversight and review levels as well as at the PM (working) level. Following contract award, program IPTs often include contractor participation. The IPPD is a management concept that simultaneously integrates all essential acquisition activities through the use of multidisciplinary teams (i.e., IPTs) to optimize the design, manufacturing and supportability processes.

The DoD has recognized the importance of working as crossfunctional or integrated teams, a process which maximizes overall performance, not just the performance of individual functional areas. Our acquisition system should be one which capitalizes on the strengths of all its participants. By working together as a team, we can identify and resolve problems early and thus ensure the highest probability of success for our programs.